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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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15 November 2022

Alan Buckley  
Headteacher  
Mount Tamar School  
Row Lane  
Higher St Budeaux  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL5 2EF

Dear Mr Buckley

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Mount Tamar School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 28 and 29 September 2022 on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in January 2022.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chair and members of the interim executive board (IEB) and the manager of the multi-agency safeguarding hub, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with two groups of primary and secondary pupils. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Mount Tamar School remains inadequate and requires special measures.  
Leaders have made insufficient progress to improve the school.**

**The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.**

## **The progress made towards the removal of special measures**

This was the first monitoring visit since the school's section 5 inspection in January 2022. Since the inspection, an assistant headteacher has been appointed as the designated safeguarding lead, alongside deputy designated safeguarding leads for each of the school's sites. An assistant special educational needs coordinator has been appointed. The deputy headteacher has been appointed as the designated teacher for children looked after, as well as an additional safeguarding caseworker. There has been a considerable turnover of staff. The focus of this monitoring inspection was the safeguarding arrangements at the school.

Despite the amendments to the safeguarding team, the changes that leaders have introduced to safeguarding arrangements do not protect the physical and emotional safety of all pupils. While the team meets regularly to review safeguarding concerns, leaders do not ensure that all information is recorded appropriately. Leaders do not consistently address the safeguarding issues raised by staff. In some cases, leaders deem concerns raised by staff about pupils to be about behaviour when there are safeguarding issues. As a result, leaders do not consistently take action to address the risks to pupils' safety.

There have been some improvements since the previous inspection. For example, all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training with frequent updates. All staff have been trained to use physical intervention appropriately to keep pupils safe. De-escalation strategies are used successfully and, as a result, there has been a marked decline in the use of physical intervention. Leaders carry out background checks on all adults employed at the school, and the single central record is compliant.

Leaders have identified some safeguarding risks across the school's sites. For example, leaders have appointed a gatekeeper to ensure that pupils learn safely at the Row Lane site. However, leaders acknowledge that there are still risks to pupils' safety that affect their learning. At the Seymour House site, pupils' safety is at risk as they can easily access an adjoining road. Leaders have revised their risk assessments, but acknowledge that further work is required to ensure the security of the school sites. The farm site enables pupils to learn in a stimulating and safe environment.

The IEB meets regularly to review the school's work. Governors bring a breadth of expertise to their roles. Governors monitor the new safeguarding arrangements. However, they have not acted quickly enough to ensure that the school site enables pupils to learn safely. Governors and school leaders have not ensured that school policies, including the safeguarding policy, are up to date. Although most members of staff are proud to work at the school, many feel that leaders do not take their workload into account when developing policies and procedures.

The school uses a range of alternative providers to tailor the curriculum to the needs of pupils. For example, some pupils learn about bicycle maintenance, while others learn about carpentry and building.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Plymouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin  
**His Majesty's Inspector**